

Email sent to ECCO on August 20, 2020:

I am writing to update you about the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center's (MZMC's) proposed renovation of its property, located at 3343 E Bde Maka Ska Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55408. Our project has not changed, but our awareness of the required variances has.

As I explained in my August 3, 2020 email, MZMC seeks to remove a 1-story addition, consisting of a garage and unheated storage space, and replace it with a 1-story addition that will be used for a new meditation hall (zendo). To build this addition and comply with the Zoning Code we would need at least 12 parking spaces on our property, which would effectively require converting a substantial portion of our landscaped, publicly accessible yard into a paved parking lot.

To avoid this, we propose building a parking area that would be substantially the same size and in the same location as our current parking area. We originally believed that a variance permitting us to maintain three conforming parking spots would suffice. However, we subsequently learned that to comply with the Code's parking area design standards, we require a variance allowing us to have one off-street parking spot. That spot will be a handicapped accessible parking spot located at the site of our current parking area, which would remain at approximately its current size.

We also seek to remodel our main front entrance to make it safer and conform with the building code. The building code requires the surfaces on both sides of a door to be on the same level and a minimum size. Currently, the stoop is 7 inches lower than the interior floor level, and it is too small to meet code. We plan to raise the exterior landing to the height of the interior floor, and to enlarge it to accommodate an area of rescue assistance for a handicapped person in accordance with the Minnesota Accessibility Code and the Americans With Disabilities Act. We will also widen the steps that lead up to the landing from the existing concrete sidewalk. Because this improvement is within 40 feet of the top of a steep slope in the SH Shoreland Overlay District, a variance is required.

I hope ECCO will support MZMC's application for these two variances. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this.

Wayne Moskowitz
MZMC Board Member and Treasurer